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THE HISTORIC NAMES  
OF THE STREETS & LANES  
OF OXFORD

*Intra Muros*

by

H. E. SALTER

*with a Map & a Preface by*

ROBERT BRIDGES



*Why change the titles of your streets?  
You fools! you'll want them all again.*

TENNYSON.

OXFORD  
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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## P R E F A C E

IN the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee it was rumoured that the townsmen would signalize its celebration in Oxford by restoring to the streets of their city some of the historic names which had discredibly fallen into disuse and oblivion. But nothing came of that good intention ; and the occasion was ill lost, since without some very unusual enthusiasm it is not to be expected that a busy people will engage themselves in a sentimental or æsthetic reform of which the first evident result must be a practical inconvenience.

As the history of our own streets will show, the change of a current name is a very different matter nowadays from what it used to be. That the name of a street should be absolutely fixed and the numeration of its houses exact, is a modern convenience of extreme utility ; and so much of our everyday life depends upon it that any threat to disturb the existing convention must encounter very reasonable opposition. One need only consider the postmen and tax-gatherers.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, in the Middle Ages the names of the streets were loosely held ; they were not publicly affixed and placarded to the eye, and were liable to be imposed and changed by any accident that led to the places being thought of in a new relation. The concentration, for instance, of any particular trade in a street, or a change in the tenancy of the chief house in it, might

<sup>1</sup> The possibility of the taxgatherers being thereby provoked to strike would perhaps deter no one.

transmute its designation ; and no one seems to have been much troubled except the historian, who if he wished to identify a locality in his annals might find that he had two or three names to choose from, and be compelled to resort to a cumbersome description : Mr. Salter's paper gives several instances. Now, compared with those times, the greater comfort which distinguishes our modern life is based on the elaborate accommodation of such various complexities that the dislocation of any one of them has (as even the most ignorant wasters are beginning to discover) very far-reaching effects. The disturbance of any one of them calls for delicate handling.

The fact that in the face of these difficulties it has been seriously proposed by practical citizens to alter some of our street-names is a proof that the historical disgrace is recognized to be of unusual magnitude, and that it inflicts a sense of shame on those who can be held responsible for it. And if the Post Office should be refractory and protest against interference with their established routine it may be pointed out that their present nomenclature is so far from being universally useful, that it actually sometimes causes the inconvenience which it is designed to obviate ; so that they might reasonably be exhorted to reform their system on utilitarian principles. For instance, the foolish appellation 'Church Street' has directed hundreds astray and often disappointed the trysts that it was provided to ensure.

Nor would there in the actual result be much inconvenience caused by making the few changes which will be thought desirable. If the silly modernism 'St. Catherine Street' were done away with, and the historic 'Cat Street' restored, there is, I believe, no single human being whose affairs would be in any way affected. In some of the other



changes there would be very few interests involved, and all inconveniences might be obviated by the simple device of setting up the historic name above the one now in vogue, and leaving them there placarded together for one year, during which time both names would become familiar to all tenants, postmen, errand boys, and tradesmen's porters, so that the withdrawal of the offensive one at the end of that time would be almost unperceived.

The relinquished good purpose of the townspeople was taken up a year or so since by some members of the University, and their project met with such wide sympathy that they intend to prosecute it, as they promised, by publishing a few papers on the subject. The present paper (to which these remarks are prefatory) deals with the names of the streets within the walls, and we have to thank Mr. Salter for putting his learning so generously and skilfully at our disposal. The purpose of his paper is solely to give full information to any one who may care to have it; and we have little doubt that all who make themselves acquainted with the historical facts will come to be much of the same opinion as to what changes are desirable. It is on such a consensus of informed opinion that we rely to ensure the reform. The practical suggestions in the note at the end are merely a summary of the judgement for which, it is presumed, most readers will be prepared, and they are offered as an example of the opinions of some of those who inaugurated this movement.

The map, which was drawn to illustrate Mr. Salter's paper, is reduced from a tracing of the Ordnance revised Survey of 1898, the scale of which is 25·344 in. to the mile. The churches and main college buildings are faintly shown

in order to make identification of sites easy ; other details are omitted.

The chief sources for the following article are :

*The Cartulary of St. Frideswide's* (published by the Oxf. Hist. Soc.), vol. i, p. 502.

*The Cartulary of the Hospital of St. John* (Oxf. Hist. Soc.), vol. iii, p. 507.

Wood, *City of Oxford* (Oxf. Hist. Soc.), vol. i, pp. 652-4.

*Wood's Life and Times* (Oxf. Hist. Soc.), vol. v, pp. 112-24.

*Book of Wills*, Index, 10.

*Survey of Oxford in 1772* (printed by the University Press, 1912).

# INTRA MUROS

## THE OLD NAMES OF THE STREETS OF OXFORD

WHEN our records of Oxford geography begin, 900 years ago, the streets of Oxford were practically the same as they are now. Two or three unnecessary lanes have been closed and built upon; the narrower streets have been widened, especially since 1771, when powers for that purpose were given by Act of Parliament;<sup>1</sup> but only two new streets have been made within the walls, one in 1770 still known as *New Road*, leading from what was then the church of St. Peter le Bailey to Botley causeway, and the other a hundred years later, when a road, named *King Edward Street*, was made through the property of Oriel College to provide an approach to the College.

But if the streets of Oxford are the same, the names are different. They have all changed their names and some of them more than once. The changes are of varying merit, some of them good, some of them not. It is the purpose of this pamphlet to show what the names have been at different times.

### § 1. Streets from Carfax southwards.

The street which leads from Carfax to Folly Bridge was divided in old days into two portions by *South Gate*, which stood on the north side of what is now Brewers Street. Although South Gate was removed when Christ Church was built, the street still had two names for the two portions as late as 1750, when Isaac Taylor's map was made; between Carfax and South Gate it was called *Fish Street*; from South Gate to Folly Bridge it was called *Grandpont*.

*Fish Street* is not the first name that the street bore. The Cartulary of St. Frideswide shows<sup>2</sup> that it was called

<sup>1</sup> Oxford Mile-Ways Act, 11 Geo. III, cap. 19.

<sup>2</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 197, 224.

## 8 STREETS FROM CARFAX SOUTHWARDS

'*Jewry*' in 1210; and one deed<sup>1</sup> of about the same date calls it '*Gret Jury Lane*'. The name does not mean that it was a spot where Jews were obliged to reside; there was no Jewry of that kind in Oxford; but Jews congregated in this street because their synagogue, or as the English called it 'their school', was situated where the north front of Christ Church now is.<sup>2</sup> But after the expulsion of the Jews in 1290, the street received another name. As early as 1369 the house which is now at the corner of Blue Boar Lane is described<sup>3</sup> as 'in le Fysshestrete', and *Fish Street* was the only name for the street as late as 1772<sup>4</sup> and even later. In the Middle Ages, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, when the market was held, the fishmongers had stalls at the upper end of the street, opposite the Town Hall and the Free Library; these extended right across the road; so that we read in a Coroners' Inquest of 1320 that a man fled up the street towards Carfax 'as far as the tenement of John de Dokelinton', and as he could not escape 'because of the tables of the fishmongers' he turned on his pursuer and killed him.<sup>5</sup> The tenement of John de Dokelinton, otherwise known as Dokelinton's Inn, is now the Post Office.<sup>6</sup>

*Grandpont* was the name of the other half of the street from early times. The word 'pont' (and the same is true of the word 'bridge') often meant in the Middle Ages an embankment, and not what we mean by a bridge. For instance, there was a 'pontarius', or bridge-hermit, on the Woodstock Road, at a place called *Fres* or *Frise*, just within the boundary of Yarnton; the hermitage was given to Oseney Abbey before 1200, and the remains of it were visible in Wood's time. But the noteworthy point is that there is no river or stream at *Frise*, but the ground is marshy, and some hermit must have banked up the road and made a culvert to let the rain-water pass beneath. Thus the road became a 'pont'. At Oxford the *Great Bridge* meant not merely Folly Bridge, but the series of arches, more than 40 in number, from the foot of Hinxey Hill to South Gate,<sup>7</sup> together with the embanked road above them. As early as 1282 the house which is now

<sup>1</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 107.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* i. 208; also *Balliol Oxford Deeds*, p. 108.

<sup>3</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 237.

<sup>4</sup> *Survey of Oxford in 1772* (ed. Salter), 1912.

<sup>5</sup> *Coroners' Inquests*, p. 21 (printed by the Oxf. Chron. Co.).

<sup>6</sup> *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii. 170-87.

<sup>7</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 416.

15 St. Aldate's was described as 'super magnum pontem',<sup>1</sup> i.e. 'on Grandpont', and many other instances might be given. It may be noticed that a house is described as *in* Fish Street, but *super* Grandpont; this, of course, is correct, for the house is *on* the embankment. By Wood's time Grandpont had become merely the name of the street, and he speaks<sup>2</sup> of 'the house of Mr. Abraham Davis *in* Grandpont' (now called Bishop King's palace), and that 'Mr. Walter Cave died in his house in Grandpoole' (now Littlemore Hall).<sup>3</sup> In the map of 1750 the street is still *Grandpont*, but in the Survey of 1772 the whole street as far as Folly Bridge is called *Fish Street*.

Passing northwards from Folly Bridge we come to *Speedwell Street* on the left-hand side, which is an old street and was known as *Mill Lane* in the Middle Ages. In Wood's time it was called *Preachers' Lane*,<sup>4</sup> because it had been an entrance to the land of the Friars Preachers; but in a lease of 1639 it is called *Mill Lane*,<sup>5</sup> and in a deed<sup>6</sup> of 1427 it is 'the little lane called Mill Lane, alias Buterwyke Lane, by the Friars Preachers'. Buterwyke was one of the University beadles and at that time owned the house on the south side of the lane. It was called *Mill Lane* because it led to the mill of the Black Friars which was situated on a branch of the Thames, running parallel with the street, less than 100 yards away; the bed of the stream has now been filled up, and the mill was out of use as early as 1500; but it is mentioned frequently in deeds connected with the advent of the Black Friars, and one deed<sup>7</sup> of about 1230 which speaks of 'the lane leading to the mill of Philip the Miller' shows us who occupied it before the time of the Black Friars.

On the right-hand side, where now is the entrance to Christ Church meadow, there was a lane which in 1481 was called *Shulinstole*,<sup>8</sup> in 1400 *Schelwyngstole*,<sup>9</sup> and there are other spellings of the name. It was the road which led to Trill Mill, lying at the east end of No. 14 St. Aldate's, and the name perhaps means that the pool above the mill was where the cucking-stool was used.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Cart. Hosp. of St. John*, ii. 199.

<sup>2</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, i. 468.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* i. 469. Grandpole is a corruption of Grandpont.

<sup>4</sup> *Wood, City of Oxford*, i. 302; *Wood's Life and Times*, ii. 222.

<sup>5</sup> *Town Archives*, A. 5. 4, p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> *All Souls deed*, no. 70.

<sup>7</sup> *Oseney deed*, St. Mich. South 11.

<sup>8</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 486.

<sup>9</sup> *ib.* i. 479.

<sup>10</sup> *Wood, City of Oxford*, i. 299.



The lane beneath the City Wall, now *Brewers Street*, had no name in early times. We have many deeds of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which mention houses in that lane, but they are always described as 'sub muro'. In 1478 it is called *Sleyng Lane*,<sup>1</sup> no doubt from the butchers who, by choice or compulsion, congregated there. It seems that the mediaeval-spelling of 'slay' was 'sle', and in the Latin poem about the day of St. Scholastica we read 'sle, sle vocitant' (they shout 'slay, slay'). The name was in use in Anthony Wood's time,<sup>2</sup> and as late as 1690 a lease at Balliol still describes it as *Sleyne Lane*;<sup>3</sup> but it had long been deserted by butchers. About 1620 Oliver Smith, a brewer, bought three adjacent houses, one of which was known as Slaughter House,<sup>4</sup> and on their site he built a house which is still standing, and made a brewery hard by. The Smiths were followed by the Tippings, and they by the Micklems, all of whom were brewers; and as the brewery was extended all along the lane, it became *Brewers' Lane* in the map of 1750, and now is promoted to *Brewers Street*.

Passing northward through South Gate, we have *Beef Hall Lane* on the left-hand side, which still retains its old name. The hall belonged in 1318 to Thomas de Beaufo<sup>5</sup> (latinized 'bella fago'); whence no doubt it was called Beefo Hall, which was altered by some mediaeval wit into Beef Hall.

The next street was known as *Pennyferthing Street* in 1349<sup>6</sup> and earlier, and bore no other name until the middle of the last century. It probably obtained the name from William Pennyferthing<sup>7</sup> who was bailiff in 1238, but it is not known that he had land in this street.

On the right-hand side, opposite Beef Hall Lane, where now is the entrance to Tom Quad, was a small lane called *St. Frideswide's Lane*,<sup>8</sup> which led to the churchyard of St. Frideswide's, and finally came out where now is the house of the President of Corpus. When Cardinal Wolsey bought all the properties which touched this lane, he was allowed to close it, and built his quadrangle across it.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 82. Wood, *City of Oxford* (i. 307), asserts that it was called Lumbard Lane; no evidence for this has been found, and he adduces none.

<sup>2</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, ii. 72, 103.

<sup>3</sup> *Oxford Balliol Deeds*, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup> Town Archives, A. 5. 4, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> *University Archives*, i. 277.

<sup>6</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 46.

<sup>7</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 325.

<sup>8</sup> *Balliol Oxford Deeds*, p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> See the plan in *Balliol Oxford Deeds*, p. 100.

About sixty yards farther north was another lane called *Little Jewry* in 1325 and subsequent years,<sup>1</sup> no doubt because it was at one time a popular residence of Jews. Also it so happened that the *Schola Iuris Civilis* was in this lane, and perhaps for this reason it was called *Jury Lane*<sup>2</sup> in 1376; in 1526 it is called *Civil School Lane*.<sup>3</sup> It was not closed by Cardinal Wolsey but by Henry VIII, who after the Dissolution of the Monasteries possessed all the tenements which touched this lane; and when he enlarged Cardinal College, he threw this lane into the site. Perhaps there was some promise that a lane should be made to take its place; and in 1553 Dean Tresham made a road to the north of it through the property of Christ Church, passing out into Fish Street under an archway. It was known at first as *Tresham's Lane*; in Wood's time it was called *Blueboar Lane*, from the inn called the Blueboar which stood where now the Public Library is.<sup>4</sup>

On the other side of the road was *Kepeharm's Lane*, sometimes called *Henxey Lane*,<sup>5</sup> leading through what is now New Inn to Henxey Hall which lay at the west end of the property. A deed at Oriel shows that there was an exit from *Kepeharm Lane* into Pennyfarthing Street past what is now the Rectory of St. Aldate's. But *Kepeharm's Lane* was only for foot passengers and was private property, and was closed before the end of the Middle Ages.

## § 2. Streets westward from Carfax.

The street leading westward from Carfax was *The Bailey*,<sup>6</sup> sometimes the *Great Bailey*. A 'bailey' was a portion of a town where there was some special jurisdiction; but there is no indication that there was any bailey of that kind in Queen Street, still less that there was a building called *Magnum Balliolum*, as the Ordnance Survey assures us. Probably the bailey was the Castle which from the year 1199 was separated from the rest of the town, being under the jurisdiction of the sheriff, whereas the town was governed by the mayor and bailiffs. It is noticeable that the church St. Peter le Bailey is called St. Peter by the Castle in the twelfth century, and there is no mention of 'le Bailey' until after 1199. Perhaps the earliest instance of the street being

<sup>1</sup> *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, iii. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Balliol Oxford Deeds*, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, ii. 388.

<sup>5</sup> *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii. 178, 179, 182.

<sup>6</sup> *Book of Wills*, pp. 49, 63.

called *The Bailey* is about 1260.<sup>1</sup> In 1556 the Town Council passed an ordinance that 'the bochers of the City shall enjoy their standings in the new shambles, paying xxiiis. a year for every shop'.<sup>2</sup> These were the butchers' stalls which the Corporation had built in the roadway towards the west end of the street; their situation may be seen in the map of 1750. This building was known as 'the new Bocher Row' in 1563,<sup>3</sup> and the Butcherow in 1589.<sup>4</sup> In 1657 the street itself was known as *Old Butcherewe*,<sup>5</sup> and there are some who can still remember when the name was in use. In the Survey of 1772 the street is called *Butcherow* as far as West Gate, but in the map of 1750, as also in Agas, the western part is called *Castle Street*, as now. In the Middle Ages *The Bailey* included both *Queen Street* and *Castle Street*.

The street running southwards to St. Ebbe's Church was the *Little Bailey*, and the deeds<sup>6</sup> connected with No. 11 St. Ebbe's Street show that as early as 1392 it was 'in Parvo Ballio'. Just as Little Jewry was at right angles to Great Jewry, so *Little Bailey* was at right angles to Great Bailey. In the Survey of 1772 it is *St. Ebbe's Lane*; in the map of 1750 it has no name; in Wood's time it was called *Milk Street* by some, but Wood distrusts the name.<sup>7</sup>

The street from St. Ebbe's Church to West Gate had the name *Freren Street* (i. e. Friars' Street) in 1490,<sup>8</sup> but it has not been found in earlier or later deeds. In the map of 1750 and in the Survey of 1772 it is *St. Ebbe's Street*; in the map of 1850 it becomes *Church Street*.

The street running northwards past New Inn Hall was occasionally called *North Bailey*. Thus in 1399 New College<sup>9</sup> has a toft 'in a street called North Baly'. Later it was called *The Seven Deadly Sins*; thus in 1570 New College grants a lease of a tenement having New Inn Hall on the north side and 'a lane called the vii deadly sins' on the east side;<sup>10</sup> also in a New College rental of 1666 'For certain tenements in the 7 deadly sinnes lane lying next to New Inn' (i. e. New Inn Hall); and in a paper at New College, dated June 27, 1797, the dwelling-house in 'Seven Deadly Sins, commonly called New Inn Hall Lane' is declared to be in decent repair. Many other quotations

<sup>1</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 276.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of the City of Oxford*, p. 256.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* p. 303.

<sup>4</sup> *Oxford Balliol Deeds*, p. 178.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* p. 178.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* p. 184; see also *Book of Wills*, p. 6; Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 206.

<sup>7</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 206.

<sup>8</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 92.

<sup>9</sup> New College, Ledger I. 45.

<sup>10</sup> New College, Ledger V. 208.



could be given from New College records showing that from 1700 to 1800 the lane was called both *New Inn Hall Lane* and *The Seven Deadly Sins*. The name was in use Wood's time,<sup>1</sup> but he says he had never seen it in print, nor did he know how it arose.<sup>2</sup> In 1557 a house lying to the south of New Inn Hall is described<sup>3</sup> as 'over against the Seaven Deadly Synnes'. Perhaps this was the sign of an inn; or another suggestion is that a set of seven small cottages, which belonged to Christ Church, on the other side of the road were known as the Seven Deadly Sins. The name is not found in the map of 1750 or the Survey of 1772, but one who is still alive says that it was in regular use when he was a boy.

The foot-way which is more or less parallel with New Inn Lane, but farther west, is now known as *Bulwark's Lane*, and is so called in the Survey of 1772; but there never could have been bulwarks at that point. In the map of 1750 it is *Bullock's Lane*, and so too in the plan of the Castle, of about the year 1620, which is preserved at Christ Church and is reproduced in Skelton's *Oxonia Antiqua*, plate 127. It was named 'from' one Bullock that carried the rubbish of the city there and built him a house *circa* 1588'.<sup>4</sup>

### § 3. Streets northwards from Carfax.

The street which runs north from Carfax is called *Cornmarket* from a building erected by Dr. Claymond in 1536 in the middle of the street, to protect the sacks of corn that were for sale:

Hoc erexit opus talem Claymundus in usum  
ut siccum possit saccus habere locum.

Its position may be seen in Whitlesey's reproduction of Agas. It was pulled down by the soldiers in 1644 that its roof might be turned into bullets.<sup>5</sup> The street is not called *Cornmarket* in Wood's Diary but always *Northgate Street*. That was the name it bore in the fifteenth century,<sup>6</sup> but in earlier times the different parts of the street were described by the trades that were carried on at different spots. In 1277 the part between the Roebuck and the Cross Inn was

<sup>1</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, i. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 229.

<sup>3</sup> New College, St. Pet. le Bailey, no. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 216.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* i. 486.

<sup>6</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 268.

called 'parmuntia';<sup>1</sup> a shop in the front of the Sun Inn is 'in draperia';<sup>2</sup> in 1368 it is described<sup>3</sup> as 'in the old drapery'; elsewhere it is 'merceria', and it seems that a draper, a mercer, and a parmenter were much the same. The front of the Roebuck was 'le surie',<sup>4</sup> i.e. where the shoemakers worked, and farther north was the 'lormeria', the shops of the harness-makers.<sup>5</sup> The 'surie' is sometimes called the 'cordewanaria',<sup>6</sup> a cordwainer being a shoemaker.

On the west side was *Drapery Lane* which is mentioned in 1349.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Andrew Clark has a conjecture about it,<sup>8</sup> but there is no need for conjecture. It was a private lane made through the property that was called Drapery Hall, now the Crown; and it still exists as a private lane, for it is possible to pass through the Crown into Sewy's Lane. Such evidence as we have suggests that it was Henry Simeon who made the lane about 1220 to improve his property; for when the lane was made he built several small shops on it, which were called *The New Drapery*. But in a short time the depopulation of Oxford commenced, and the shops were taken down.

On the east side we have *Market Street*. This name, of course, cannot be older than 1772 when the Market was built, and in the Survey of 1772 it is *Jesus College Lane*; it was so called in Wood's time<sup>9</sup> and a generation earlier.<sup>10</sup> Before Jesus College existed the street was known as *Chayne Lane* or *Chany Lane*.<sup>11</sup> Thus in 1535 the house which is now 1 and 2 Market Street is described as having *Chayne Lane* on the north, the inn on the south, the property of St. Michael's Church (now 3 to 6 Market Street) on the east.<sup>12</sup> This house paid a quit-rent to Oseney and in the Oseney rentals is described as 'infra catenam';<sup>13</sup> which shows that the street obtained its name from a chain at the west end, supported no doubt on posts. The house next on the west is described in the Godstow Cartulary as 'iuxta ferream catenam'; this is of the year 1315 and shows that the chain was already in existence.<sup>14</sup> The name *Cheyne Lane* occurs first in 1340 and 1348<sup>15</sup> and was in use as late

<sup>1</sup> *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii. 81.

<sup>2</sup> *New College Cart. (MS.)*, i. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Oseney Deed, St. Martin's, 33 and 47.

<sup>4</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 305.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* i. 354.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* i. 355.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* i. 305.

<sup>8</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 487.

*Wood's Life and Times*, iii. 162.

<sup>9</sup> Hutten in *Elizabethan Oxford* (O. H. S.), p. 98.

<sup>10</sup> *Book of Wills*, pp. 97, 101.

<sup>11</sup> *ib.* p. 101.

<sup>12</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 71.

<sup>13</sup> *Godst. Cart. (E. E. T. S.)*, p. 508.

<sup>14</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 450; Oseney Charter, St. Mild. 14.

as 1632 and 1647.<sup>1</sup> The earliest name of all was 'venella qua itur a sutoria ad ecclesiam sancte Mildrede' as in a deed of 1291,<sup>2</sup> or more simply 'vicus sancte Mildrede' as in deeds from 1180 to 1334;<sup>3</sup> but St. Mildreds was an ambiguous name, as it could be (and was) used of other streets. The purpose of the chain was probably the same as that of the bar at the end of Brasenose Lane,—that noisy traffic should not disturb learned studies.

Nearly opposite Market Street was a lane called *Sewy's Lane*; in 1270 we have *Sewenestuchene*,<sup>4</sup> twychen being an old English word that means a lane and is still in use in Nottingham and other places; in 1280 we have *venella Sewy*.<sup>5</sup> There was a prominent family named Sewy and one of them must have owned land in this lane. For long there was a struggle whether the name should not become *Shoe Lane*,<sup>6</sup> but for once truth prevailed. In 1378 the Mayor and commonalty granted to William de Codeshale and others that they might build a wall across the east end of '*Sewys Lane*', which was 'a receptacle of malefactors, felons, and all refuse', while at the west end 'towards the street called the North Bailly' a great gate should be put.<sup>7</sup> The eastern end is now not only closed but built upon, but the rest of the lane is untouched and it provides a back entrance to the Crown Inn, to Grimby and Hughes's premises, and to the Clarendon Yard. Wood has confused Drapery Lane and *Sewy's Lane*.<sup>8</sup>

Farther north we have *Frewen Court*. Dr. Frewen, who lived at Frewen Hall at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was famous for the number of his wives and for being one of the best doctors in England. How soon after his time the passage was called *Frewen Court* is not known, but before his time it was called *Bridewell Lane*,<sup>9</sup> because Frewen Hall was the Bridewell of Oxford in the reign of Elizabeth; in 1662 Wood calls it 'the lane as we go to St. Mary's College'.<sup>10</sup> In the Middle Ages it was *Bodin's Lane*,<sup>11</sup> Bodin's house being on the south side of the lane, at the back of the Clarendon. Wood states that at one time it led into North Bayly; but this is an error, though a common error. It was always a blind alley, and was made

<sup>1</sup> Town Archives, A. 5. 4, pp. 27, 43.

<sup>2</sup> Oseney Charter, St. Mild. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Oseney Cartulary; also *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii. 73; *Book of Wills*, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> *Balliol Oxford Deeds*, p. 219.

<sup>5</sup> *Cart. Eynsham*, i. 295.

<sup>6</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 223.

<sup>7</sup> *Munim. Civitatis Oxon.*, p. 155.

<sup>8</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 222.

<sup>9</sup> *ib.* i. 227.

<sup>10</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, i. 443.

<sup>11</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 227.

by the Abbot of Oseney towards the end of the twelfth century, to develop his land behind the Clarendon. By making this lane he was able to provide several building sites and it was known as *venella abbatis de Oseneya*, before it was called *Bodin's Lane*.

Besides Bodin's Lane there was *Bedford's Lane*, which caused Wood much trouble; at one time he identified it with Bodin's Lane, at another time with St. Michael's Street.<sup>1</sup> There was a house behind Nos. 47 and 48 Cornmarket, and 'a highway leading to the said house called *Bedford Lane*';<sup>2</sup> it ran northward from Bodin's Lane and was fifty-one feet in length and six feet in width.<sup>3</sup> Like Bodin's Lane, it was a private lane, and made for the purpose of developing the land which had no frontage on the street.

Running westward from Northgate, what is now *St. Michael's Street* was a lane which had no name in the Middle Ages. Wood states that in the fifteenth century it was called *Wode Street*,<sup>4</sup> and the name has been found in the next century. In 1548 it is known as *Bocardo Lane*;<sup>5</sup> and in a lease of 1607 the Plough Inn in Cornmarket is described as bounded by *Bocardo Lane* on the north. In *Wood's Life and Times* neither *Wode Street* nor *Bocardo Lane* is mentioned. In the Survey of 1772 and in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* of the same date it is *New Inn Lane* or *New Inn Hall Lane*. It was, of course, called *Bocardo Lane* because it reached to the *North Gate*, where was the Town prison universally known as Bocardo.

The road which runs east from Northgate has had many names. In the Survey of 1772 it is *Ship Lane*; but though the Ship Inn, a large building still standing at the east end of St. Michael's Church, existed in Wood's time, it had not given a name to the street. Wood in one place called it *St. Michael's Lane*,<sup>6</sup> in another *Jesus Lane*.<sup>7</sup> Previously it was known as *Laurence Hall Lane* from Laurence Hall which stood on its south side not far from the Turl. Earlier still it is called *Somenor's Lane*, as in a deed of 1385,<sup>8</sup> probably because one of that name rented the Blue Anchor Inn. This name is given in Agas's map and is better known than the others; but until it was called *Ship Lane*,

<sup>1</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i, 227, 228.

<sup>2</sup> *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii, 267.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* ii, 268.

<sup>4</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i, 228.

<sup>5</sup> *Records of the City of Oxford*, p. 191.

<sup>6</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, ii, 433.

<sup>7</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i, 66 n.

<sup>8</sup> In a deed at St. Michael's Church.



the road had no name that was recognized by all. In the Middle Ages the road was continued through the site of Exeter College and all round the City coming out at East Gate, running within the Town Wall. William of Wykeham bought and closed as much of it as ran from New College cloister to East Gate, while Exeter College in the seventeenth century bought most of the remainder. This road is mentioned in many medieval deeds, but always without a name.

#### § 4. Streets from Carfax eastwards.

The road leading from Carfax to *East Gate* is known as *High Street*, but this is hardly a name. All the four streets which meet at Carfax might be called High Street in old times, all of them being highways, but gradually they acquired more distinctive titles. The finest of them all never had a special name, except to a certain extent the name *Eastgate Street*; and so it remains *High Street*, and what was once a description common to many streets has now become a name.

As we pass eastward from Carfax we have a street on the right-hand side which has had four names. As early as 1220 it is *venella sancti Edwardi*,<sup>1</sup> and in 1277 the building which was afterwards the Bear Inn (Nos. 123-5 High Street) is described as having on its east side 'vicum quod vocatur *Seint Edwardes Lane*'.<sup>2</sup> The name was given from St. Edward's Church which was on the west side of the lane, the Bear public-house standing now on part of the churchyard. About the year 1500 the parish of St. Edward's was united with All Saints and the church was destroyed; and the lane was known as *Vine Hall Lane*<sup>3</sup> in 1576, Vine Hall being at the NW. corner of Peckwater Quadrangle. In Wood's time it was known as *Bear Lane*<sup>4</sup> from the Bear Inn which extended from High Street to the Bear public-house, and in the Survey of 1772 it has this name. Its last, and very pointless, name is *Alfred Street*.

Before Christ Church was built this lane ran southward to St. Frideswide's and joined Little Jewry and St. Frideswide's Lane, of which we have spoken. On its east side it connected with a lane on the north side of Peckwater Quadrangle now known as *Bear Lane*; this name is found

<sup>1</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 283.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* i. 298.

<sup>3</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, iii. 366.

as early as 1814,<sup>1</sup> but in the Middle Ages the street was without name. Wood states<sup>2</sup> that it was called *St. Edward Street* or *Vine Hall Lane*, but in each case the evidence he produces refers to the street running north and south, now *Alfred Street*. He also states that 'it is more properly Shitbourne Lane'; here again he is wrong; this name occurs only in one Oriel deed of 1357 and is evidently the lane which was closed in 1300 or earlier extending from the end of Merton Street to the end of Little Jewry.<sup>3</sup> We know that this lane was thirteen feet wide and that the adjacent tenants were allowed to enclose it, paying six shillings a year to the City.

The street now known as *The Turl* had no fixed name in the Middle Ages. It is true that we find it called *St. Mildred's Street* in 1363;<sup>4</sup> but this name was used of three streets and was never universally accepted. Generally it is described as 'the street which leads from All Saints church to St. Mildred's'. *The Turl* is first mentioned in the City Lease book about 1590, viz. 'The hole in the wall called The Turle', and a few years later the phrase is 'the turning gate in the hole in the wall over against Trinity College'. *The Turl*, therefore, was the *twirling* gate in the foot-way which led through the City wall from Ship Street to Broad Street; and in Anthony Wood's Diary the word is used in this way, when he describes how Lord North in 1690 was conducted from Trinity College 'through the Turl' and so to Exeter College and Brasenose. The name was soon extended from the gate to the whole of the narrow foot-way, but it was not used of the road from Ship Street to All Saints until much later; in the map of 1750 and the Survey of 1772 it is only the part from Ship Street to Broad Street, and the Act of Parliament of 1781 'for making improvements within the City of Oxford' says that 'if the street or passage called the Turl was made sufficient to admit carriages, a very convenient communication would be made between Broad Street and High Street', and gives power to buy the houses on both sides of 'the Passage called the Turl'. It will be noticed therefore that 'The Turl' is not, like 'The Broad', an undergraduates' abbreviation, but is the original name.

The continuation of Cheyne Lane is now *Brasenose Lane*.

<sup>1</sup> See the map of 1814 reproduced in *Balliol Oxford Deeds*, p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 172. <sup>3</sup> In *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 272 n. we have 'Schitebur' lane'; the date is about 1290. <sup>4</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 60.

It bore this name in the time of Wood and also in the Survey of 1772, yet in the map of 1750 it is *Exeter College Lane*. In 1335 we find it called *St. Mildred's Lane*,<sup>1</sup> the church of St. Mildred having been situated at the NW. corner of Lincoln College; but this name never gained acceptance. In a deed of 1470 at Exeter College it is 'the lane leading from Lincoln College to School Street'.

The street which is now *Oriel Street* used to be *St. Mary Hall Lane*. This name occurs in 1545,<sup>2</sup> is always used by Wood, is found in the Survey of 1772 and in the map of 1814, which is given in *Balliol Oxford Deeds*, p. 208. Earlier it was known as *Schidert*, *Shadegerd*, or *Shidyerd Street*, which occurs as late as 1486<sup>3</sup> and as early as 1210;<sup>4</sup> it was a name universally accepted and no other name was used in the Middle Ages, but none could tell how it was spelt or what it meant. It is evidently a prehistoric name.

Opposite Shidyerd Street was *Schools Street*. In it were situated most of the schools or, as we should say, lecture rooms, used by the Regent Masters in the Middle Ages. When the Radcliffe was built, one side of the street was removed, and at an earlier date the northern end had been sold to the University by the Town, and the staircase to the Bodleian now stands on its site. The name has not been found earlier than 1275,<sup>5</sup> but the street was the site of schools long before. As long as the street had any existence it had no other name than *Schools Street*.

The narrow lane on the east side of Oriel College was known as *Grope Lane*. It occurs in the Oseney Cartulary about 1260, but spelt *Grape Lane*. From that date the name is common, but in Wood's time it was *Magpie Lane*, from an inn called the Magpie, which seems to have been popular and noisy.<sup>6</sup> The map<sup>7</sup> of 1814 gives '*Magpie Lane*' and also shows the Magpie Inn still in existence.

The map of 1814 shows that the name *Grope Lane* had been transferred to the little opening, now *Grove Place*; in the map it is *Group Lane*. This is the last relic of a street called *Kibald's Street* which ran from Grope Lane to the point in Logic Lane where there is a bend. The whole of it has been sold by the city to University College except this small portion at the west end. The name *Kibald Street* or *Kibold Street* is found repeatedly in deeds of

<sup>1</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of the City of Oxford*, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 85.

<sup>4</sup> *Cart. of St. Frid.* i, 321.

<sup>5</sup> A deed at Oriel.

<sup>6</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, iii, 42.

<sup>7</sup> *Balliol Oxford Deeds*, p. 208.

the thirteenth century<sup>1</sup> and, like Shidyerd, it is so ancient that its origin is unknown. Wood asserts<sup>2</sup> that at one time it went 'through the Oriole'; others have made the same statement, but no evidence has been adduced for the statement, and there is abundant evidence against it. It certainly looks as if *Grove Place* should have joined Bear Lane, but streets did not always do what they should.

Opposite Grope Lane was *Catte Street* or *Cat Street*, a name which remained unaltered from 1200<sup>3</sup> to 1800 or later. The name is prehistoric and its origin uncertain; and the same is true of the gate which stood at its north end, *Smith Gate*, suitable only for foot-passengers. The name occurs as early as 1238<sup>4</sup> and earlier; its origin is unknown.

*Queen's Lane* and *New College Lane* had no name in the Middle Ages, but *Logic Lane* has had several. It was known as *Logic Lane* in Wood's time and apparently it was not a new name, for Wood did not know its origin, and assumed that it must have been given because it was near Aristotle Hall (now the house of the Warden of Merton).<sup>5</sup> Its earliest name was *Horsemill Lane*, from a horse-mill which stood at the south end of what is now the New Buildings of University College,<sup>6</sup> and the name occurs in 1353 and 1432.<sup>7</sup> The form *Horseman Lane* occurs in 1328 and 1447,<sup>8</sup> and occasionally *Jawdewynslane*,<sup>9</sup> but this seems to be an unauthorized form, and the invention of one scribe.

From the middle of Logic Lane there ran a lane eastward towards the City Wall, through what is now the New Schools. It was the continuation of *Kibald Street* and at first was known by that name.<sup>10</sup> Subsequently it was called *Hare Hall Lane*, from a hall which stood at its west end. In 1447 it was agreed that the Hospital of St. John, having acquired all the property on both sides of the lane, might enclose it, paying to the City two shillings a year, as may be seen in *Cartulary of the Hospital of St. John*, vol. i, p. 201, where the measurements of the lane are given.

The road at the east side of the New Schools had no

<sup>1</sup> See *University Archives*, vol. i, *passim*.  
i. 187.

<sup>3</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.* i. 312.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*,

<sup>4</sup> *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii. 72.

<sup>5</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 181.

<sup>6</sup> *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii. 208.

<sup>7</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 55; *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii. 109.

<sup>8</sup> *ib.* i. 202; ii. 116.

<sup>9</sup> *ib.* i. 249-58.

<sup>10</sup> *ib.* ii. 209.



name in the Middle Ages. It was *King Street* in Hearne's time, who speaks of '*King's Street*, commonly called *Coach and Horses Lane*'.<sup>1</sup> In Wood's time it seems to have had no name.<sup>2</sup> In the map of 1750 and the Survey of 1772 it is *Coach and Horses Lane*, the name being taken from the Coach and Horses Inn which was situated there; but in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* for May 4, 1776, it is *King Street*.

*Merton Street* was known as *vicus sancti Iohannis* from before 1200.<sup>3</sup> It must be remembered that Merton Chapel was originally the parish church of St. John the Baptist, and naturally gave the name to the street in which it stood. In 1349 it is *Seintjonestreet*,<sup>4</sup> in 1447 *Jonyslane*,<sup>5</sup> sometimes it is in full the *street of St. John de Merton*. In Wood's time it was *St. John Baptist Street*.<sup>6</sup> In the Survey of 1772 it is *Merton Lane*.

#### § 4. Of certain streets north of the Wall.

Outside the City two old names have long disappeared. *Broad Street* was known as *Horsemonger Street* in the thirteenth century.<sup>7</sup> It is generally assumed that the horse-market was held in this street, but there is no clear evidence. In 1379 it is called *the high road of Candich*,<sup>8</sup> and the name was in regular use in the fifteenth<sup>9</sup> and sixteenth centuries.<sup>10</sup> Wood does not speak of *Broad Street*, but of *Candich*, and says that in September, 1674, *Candich* was paved (i.e. metalled), except the part opposite the Theatre,<sup>11</sup> and that before that time it was only a track. *Candich* was the name of the City Ditch which bordered the road on the south side. In the map of 1750 it is called *Broad Street*.

The street which runs from the west end of Broad Street towards the station was known as *Irishman's Street* about 1270<sup>12</sup> and as late as 1336.<sup>13</sup> It is suggested by Wood that Irishmen used to lodge in this street, but a more likely explanation is that the name was derived from William de Hibernia (or William le Ireys) who was bailiff of Northgate Hundred in 1254. The street is, of course, in Northgate

<sup>1</sup> Hearne, x. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 127.

<sup>3</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.*, i. 392.

<sup>4</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, i. 202.

<sup>6</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, i. 510.

<sup>7</sup> *University Archives*, pp. 310, 313; *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii. 310.

<sup>8</sup> *Oxford Balliol Deeds*, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 77.

<sup>11</sup> *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, ii. 315.

<sup>11</sup> *Wood's Life and Times*, ii. 278.

<sup>12</sup> *Cart. St. Frid.*, i. 369.

<sup>13</sup> *Book of Wills*, p. 19.

Hundred. When the population of Oxford fell, the houses in this street were among the first to be deserted, and the district acquired the name *Brokenhays*<sup>1</sup> (i.e. broken hedges). In 1515 the street itself was called *Brokenhays*, when 'the jury presented that Robert Dunham of The George stopped the golet (i.e. drain in the middle of the road) leading from Northgate into Brokenhays'.<sup>2</sup> In the time of Wood<sup>3</sup> and Hearne<sup>4</sup> it was called *Thames Street*. In the map of 1750 and the Survey of 1772 it is *George Lane*, named after the George Inn which stood on the north side at the corner, and had been known as The George from the fifteenth century.

H. E. S.

<sup>1</sup> As early as 1392; see *Cart. Hosp. St. John*, iii. 231.

<sup>2</sup> *Records of the City of Oxford*, p. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Wood, *City of Oxford*, i. 253.

<sup>4</sup> Hearne, x. 223.

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## SUGGESTIONS

1. It will probably be agreed that *Cat Street* should be restored for Saint Catherine's Street.
2. Nor can there be any objection to placarding *Shulinstole* on the vestige of that thoroughfare. It would be desirable to enquire into the original form and meaning of the name.
3. Lane should be restored for Street in
  - (a) *Blue Boar Lane* for Blue Boar Street,
  - (b) *Merton Lane* for Merton Street.
4. St. Michael's Street should be *Bocardo Lane*.
5. Alfred Street has some title to *Vine Hall Lane*.
6. A majority would probably favour the restoration of *Great Bailey* for Queen Street: and if *Little Bailey* was restored for the present St. Ebbe's Street, then the Street now inconveniently called Church Street might return to its old name *St. Ebbe's Street*. The practical inconvenience of this would be obviated by temporarily calling it *St. Ebbe's Church Street*.
7. A few other names are open to discussion; but some of the newer names are good, and we do not wish to press for anything not obviously desirable.

## 'OLD STREET NAMES IN LONDON

The proposal to restore the old names of several London streets, which comes before the L.C.C. to-morrow, is an interesting piece of conservatism. Many London streets with names rich in association were re-christened in recent times in honour of modern royalities or for other reasons.

York Street, now to return to its ancient name of Petty France, obtained its late name from the presence there of the town house of the Archbishop of York. Nowadays it is one of the least interesting of streets, with the huge block of flats, Queen Anne Mansions, overshadowing it. Petty France was in the seventeenth century a foreign colony, much as parts of Soho are now. Milton lived in a house on the site of Queen Anne Mansions during the years he served the Commonwealth. Jeremy Bentham lived in the same house in the next century, and forestalled the London County Council's habit by putting a tablet on the wall, "Sacred to Milton, prince of poets." Hazlitt occupied the house later still.

Another interesting change is from Brunswick Street (it is in Southwark below Blackfriars Bridge) to the Paris Garden. This was never the name of a street, but was that of the famous manor which in the seventeenth century stretched with grounds over the space lying between Southwark and Blackfriars Bridge. The Knights Templars held the manor once, and after the Dissolution the gardens became a public pleasance, with a bear-baiting ground and other luxuries.'

[From the *Manchester Guardian*, Nov. 2, 1920.]

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## NOTE TO MAP

The faint shading in the map, which has not come out very distinctly in the reproduction, represents the blocks of the churches, and of the Colleges, and other University buildings as at present existing. These are shown to help to locate the old streets : for instance, St. Frideswide's Lane will be seen running through Tom Quad.

The extinct streets are written in Gothic letter.

The satisfactory names are written in Italics, e.g. High Street.

The questionable modern names are written in thin Roman Capitals.

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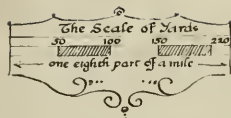
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City of Oxford  
Historical Map of the Streets  
drawn to illustrate M. Walter's  
account thereof

drawn by  
M. Walter  
1791

















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